

FOR THE FIRST SET

The Social Season at Rideau Hall Opened.

CANADA'S "400" AT HOME

Those Who Fail to Receive a Card to the Hall are not in it—The Ottawa Landers of Society.

With the reassembling of parliament in February the families comprising what is known as the "first set," begin to return to Ottawa, the Canadian capital.

I have chosen to describe the social life at Ottawa because it is the city where the viceregal and his family and all the high officials of Canada reside.

The governor general, or more properly the viceregal, lives in Rideau hall, an old fashioned but picturesque mansion built of gray-blue limestone. A short distance away the Rideau river goes rushing and roaring by, but early in December its thunders are hushed, for it is covered with a coat of ice thick enough to bear an army. The hall is set in the heart of a grove of fir, spruce and pine, that with their deep green show defiance in winter to the snow that covers all the land as if with a shroud.

The season at Ottawa may be said to begin with the winter, for then there can be snow-shoeing parties, skating on the canal at Rideau river and the private rinks, and what the Canadian loves above all, tobogganing. Every fine night when the frost is keen and the snow hard toboggans go swishing down a thousand hills, but nowhere is this sport more exhilarating than down the steep artificial slides that stand just below Rideau hall.

It is the ambition of every one with social aspirations who either visits the capital or lives there to visit Rideau hall. Anybody who does not receive a card for Rideau hall is not considered in society and is looked down upon by those who are invited. When the season has begun people come there from the most distant extremes of the country, some from British Columbia and others from Halifax. Parents bring their daughters, if they are attractive

and, to which come those who are not of the political set. She has also quiet little dinner parties, charades and sometimes dancing in the evening, but the public never know anything about them. Often, too, the viceregal folk come out at night, when the moon is full, dress themselves in their bluest suits, clad on their snowshoes and start out across the fields and through the woods, not returning till near midnight. The other Rideau hospitalities



LADY STANLEY.

consist of a card for the "at homes" and one for the state ball. The former card announces that her excellency will be at home two evenings in the week from nine to twelve o'clock and the word "tobogganing" is printed on the lower right hand corner.

The present governor general, Lord Stanley, of Preston, was appointed on the departure of Lord Lansdowne, who is now viceroy of India. Lady Stanley, a very kindly and motherly-looking woman, bids fair to become as popular among the Ottawa folks as Lady Dufferin was. She has already established the "Lady Stanley institute of trained nurses," which has done noble service in providing skilled nurses in the capital, a city where there is nearly always small-pox. She likes dark dresses, but in winter she is muffled from head to foot in seal or other fur. There is no other such patron of concerts, bazars and all kinds of charitable work as she, and she drives to every "profession" held at either convent, where she is lavish in her liberality. As for Lord Stanley, he is somewhat of an athlete, a noted pedestrian and of sturdy build. He has dark hair and beard, a genial face and is nearly always seen with a cigarette between his lips, which he inhales after the manner of those known in the United States as "cigarette fiends."

There is nothing that I know more picturesque than a toboggan party at night on the Hall grounds. About nine o'clock the guests begin to arrive, dragging their toboggans, every one, man and woman, clad in blanket suit. Some of the costumes are made of white blanketing with the blue stripes near the edges, others are navy blue or myrtle green piped with scarlet, crimson or maroon, and some are a light blue or tawny brown. Around the



LADY MACDONALD.

waist is tied a long heavy-knitted scarf of blue, crimson, scarlet or whatever color the wearer prefers; on the head is a toque also of knitted wool and somewhat like a Turkish cap, but there is a tassel attached to the top which hangs down to the ear. The men wear black stockings, knickerbockers and buff moccasins. The women also wear moccasins. A large number of the guests take along their "sleds," dragging them through the grounds. The guests gather to the number of seven or eight hundred, in the hollow below the hall where the slides are situated. Naps at hand is the rink, lighted with torches, where those who do not want to take the plunge down the slides can enjoy themselves. Near the slides a huge fire is built, from three to eight cords of wood being piled in the form of a pyramid. Those who want to attend the "at home" but who are afraid to go down the slides or not able to skate keep close to the huge burning pile and watch the rest. There may not be a breath of air moving, but the glass often shows the mercury twenty degrees below zero; so that those standing near the fire are obliged to turn rapidly each portion of the body toward the heat to keep from freezing. Torches are stuck here and there among the trees and when a puff of wind moves the flame the shadows of the pines and spruce dance upon the snow like huge fantastic goblins.

Each toboggan slide is a sort of Jacob's ladder, where people are constantly ascending and descending. The climb is tiresome and tedious, and while one long row of people are going up, the "swish," "swish" of the descending toboggans can be heard with a few seconds between each sound. The head of the slide is small and there is not even standing room for all who are waiting for their turn to go down. The track is simply a narrow, icy trough, with snow walls on either side, and there are two rows of Chinese lanterns to light the steersman through his swift voyage. An expert tobogganer will take two or three ladies upon his vehicle, putting them in front, while he throws himself down, extending one foot behind to steer with. The faintest touch of his moccasined toe, properly made, steers the toboggan with precision. I have taken certain young ladies down these slides, and as it was the first time that they ever had a toboggan ride I asked them how they liked it. "It was just divine," they assured me, but they were shivering. The truth is when one first plunges almost sheer down as if shot from a cannon,

the sensation is that your heart and entire inner economy are coming up your throat, your eyes swim and your brain reels. The first experience is not "divine," it is hideous. But the mad exhilaration of it soon enters your veins, and presently there is for you in all the world no outside sport like the toboggan. There are some accidents in these icy troughs. I have seen a very pretty girl have her cheek torn open because the clumsy steersman ran into a returning tobogganer. I once saw two senators from the lumber districts, who had been threatening for years to take "a plunge down." They both sat upright on the toboggan, and one of them said: "Let her go!" Then there was a puff of powdered ice down the track, and two black objects rolling down after an empty sled. They were cut and bruised and left the grounds by the back gate. Tobogganing begins to slacken at eleven; then the guests go to the refectory, where they get supper with claret cup, champagne or some other wine, which is served by attendants in livery.

The state ball, however, is the great social event of the year, and in Lord Dufferin's time about 700 persons were invited to it; but the number was less than half of those who thought they ought to be asked. Lord Lorne and Princess Louise, therefore, sought to solve the difficulty by having two balls and asking to one those who were not present at the other, and in this way much heartburning was overcome. The Stanleys follow the plan of their predecessors, inviting such persons on the list as are still approved of. But after all the state balls are, in British social parlance, "very mixed affairs."



LADY CARON.

Every prominent politician has friends, either residents of the capital or visitors, and most of these are tradespeople. One of the A. D. C.'s in Lord Lorne's time had the mortification to discover in his vis-a-vis in a set of quadrilles the person who had been in the habit of visiting the hall once a week to deliver coal oil. He pleaded vertigo and left the dance, but the coal-oil man hunted up a friend, who was a moccasin maker, and danced the thing through. Among some of the most conspicuous figures at the state ball, beside the host in the present regime, are the Chief Justice of Canada, Sir William Ritchie and Lady Ritchie, Sir Adolph Caron, minister of militia; Sir John Thompson, leader of the conservatives in the house of commons; Maj. Gen. Herbert, commander in chief of the Canadian militia and defense, with his stately-looking wife, Hon. Mrs. Herbert; the military secretary who lives at Rideau hall, Maj. Charles Colville, son and heir of Lord Colville of Culross; Viscount Kilcoursie, of the staff; Capt. Edward Stanley, of the Grenadier guards, besides the ministers and their wives.

Lord and Lady Stanley spend a month or more in early summer in tents on the Grand cascades, in Quebec, a picturesque spot rimmed around with cool evergreen hills. Here and there is a government preserve, and perhaps the best salmon fishing in the world. Princess Louise once killed a salmon there weighing twenty-five pounds, and when it reached the queen it was the wonder of all the courtiers. Lady Stanley also throws the Jack Scott and dusty miller, but she is a



MRS. PORTER.

more timid fisherwoman than Princess Louise. After the fishing season is over the vice royalties return for the remainder of the summer to Quebec, residing in the citadel in upper town within a stone's throw of where fell the two heroes idolized in Canadian story, Wolfe and Mon calm, the one the leader of the French, the other the English hero. EDWARD COLLINS.

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Mellard's Premium Chocolate.	Per pound, 30c
Mellard's Cocoa.	Half lb boxes, 20c
100 lbs Best Roller Process Flour.	\$2.15
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25 lbs Buckwheat Flour.	65 cents
23 lbs Granulated Sugar for	\$1.00
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and pretty, and many of these girls go home engaged to some "good catch." The daughters of the "nouveau riches" are on the alert for men of title, or for "younger sons" who can give them a social position in England, and they obtain cards for the state balls and the "at homes" of her excellency, through the influence of cabinet ministers, senators and members of parliament. A snobbish young doctor or lawyer, who puts his professional card in his window, is more overjoyed to receive a card with a coronet on it than to receive fifty patients or as many clients, for if it is known that he does not go to the hall he will fall to secure much of the patronage worth having. I shall never forget my own experience on my first visit to Ottawa. I met a party of young men employed in the civil service, and while we were smoking one of them asked me if I had a card for Rideau hall. I said no, not explaining that I had not called and that neither the governor nor any of his aids knew that I was in the capital. But I had no sooner said "no" than their demeanor changed toward me; they became less cordial and confidential, and I saw one of them scrutinizing my boots and my linen. As we parted, two of them gave me the tips of their fingers, and while they did so, looked at somebody else. A little while afterward, when it came to their ears that I was in confidential relations with their excellencies and was designated to write a book on their social and political administration, they endeavored to resume their effusiveness, but I never smoked with them again. They were young gentlemen from small country places, but they were very definite types of a good many of the swells in the Ottawa civil service. Yet society there is by no means made up entirely of persons like



LORD STANLEY.

those, for you find dignity and self-respect among a large number who take a vice-regal invitation as a matter of course.

The first step to take on visiting Ottawa, if you wish to be invited to Rideau hall, is to go and leave cards for the governor general and his wife, and it will be good policy also to leave one for each of the aids de camp. Your name is taken up, inquiries are made about you, and if you are deemed worthy of the honor a large card with a coronet on the top is sent to you. The hospitalities of Rideau hall are not numerous, consisting of a few dinner parties given to cabinet ministers, senators and members of parliament. These dinners are formal affairs, and the guests sit down about eight, but the governor's wife has her five o'clock